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ABSTRACT

In the school, concern about individual differences is still reserved almost exclusively for students, while professional personnel are being limited by assigned role functions, role expectations, performance, and criteria. One reason for this situation is that a power elite model of decision making is prevalent in today's schools. Another reason is that teachers' educational experiences were and are structured around a deficit or scientific model instead of a developmental model. The Perceptual Baseline System measures the degree of congruence between perceived philosophic beliefs and perceived day-to-day practices. It is not designed to foster change, but to encourage self awareness, self acceptance, and harmony between beliefs and practices. Two questionnaires, the Educational Beliefs System Inventory and the Educational Practice Belief Inventory, test individuals' values from three educational perspectives: (1) behavioristic beliefs; (2) cognitive psychology and experimentalist philosophy; and (3) humanistic psychology and existential philosophy. Such questions as "What do you believe about human nature?', "What do you believe about social learning?" and "What do you believe about curriculum?" appear in the tests. The results provide each individual with a profile that can be matched against a school or school district average. (SG)

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Staff Development: A Humanized Approach

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Staff Development: A Humanized Approach

Educators have been researching, talking and writing about human variability for years. In fact, educators have been talking about individual differences for so long it is interesting that they still do not demonstrate belief in the concept. Why is it that in a school setting the notion of individual differences is still reserved almost exclusively for students? Why aren't teachers as persons allowed, if indeed not encouraged, to experience the freedom inherent in the concept?

Professional personnel in the school setting are limited by being assigned role functions, role expectations, role performance, and role criteria. Teachers and students alike bring their person to the role they assume at school. Teachers feel, teachers worry, teachers care, and teachers have different needs, wants, desires, and concerns as do students.

The literature consistently concludes that the teacher is one of the most significant variables in the classroom affecting the growth of youngsters academically, socially, and emotionally. Yet little time is devoted to the study of self in teacher education curriculum at the higher education level. Research by Combs, et.al. (1974), Aspy and Roebuck (1974), Rogers (1977), and McClelland, et.al. (1978) raise serious questions relative to the emphasis placed on proper techniques in teaching or parenting role performance. If school improvement is to occur, then the uniqueness of all people, old and young, must be entertained.

Teacher Freedom

Teaching has detoured from its almost obtained goal of professionalism to an out and out occupation. Many, if not most teachers, have come to see

their teaching assignment as a job due to the degree of powerlessness and hopelessness they have experienced over the years. Nothing is more depressing than to be constantly encouraged or coerced, whichever the case may be, to implement decisions that one was not involved in making. This lack of involvement over the years has served to depress teacher enthusiasm and vitality.

We contend that there are at least two reasons for this current state of the art. First, a power elite model of decision making is prevalent in today's schools. This model is a down the line technique for making and implementing decisions and encourages formalistic impersonality, separating organizational duties from the private lives of employees. Teachers are viewed collectively as composing a school as opposed to the school being composed of individual persons. This power-elite structure might work in profit motive institutions, but can it be applied effectively to schools and institutions with a social motive? Abbott and Lovell (1965) predict ". . . that the educational administrator of the future will be more like the hospital administrator and less like the industrial tycoon, who appears to be our model today" (p. 49). The authors believe that quality leadership is determined not by the number of persons dominated but by the number of personalities enhanced.

A second reason could be that the bulk of perservice and inservice education experiences of today's teachers and administrators still reflect a scientific model of curriculum and instructional development. In other words, as students, teachers' educational experiences were and are structured or patterned around a deficit or scientific model; teachers have been taught how to employ such a model while creating learning experiences for their students.

McLaughlin and Berman (1977) establish the futility of a deficit orientation in conducting inservice programs for teachers; yet this orientation remains as top priority for inservice endeavors. In reporting on the Rand Corporation study, they noted that the deficit model is based on the assumption that problems in schools or with teachers have to do with inadequate information, inadequate skills, and so on. By imparting skills and information, teachers' behaviors will be corrected or improved and they will be more effective in the classroom. This approach to inservice usually results in teachers exchanging one set of role behaviors for another set of role behaviors that have been decreed as good by those in power.

However, school districts experiencing success with inservice activities tend to use a developmental approach as opposed to the deficit model. This approach is not a single program, for the districts with successful inservice used different programs. Rather, the developmental approach is rooted in an attitude that pervades the entire district. This attitude includes a set of expectations about the role of teachers, their professional needs, and their responsibility for solving their own problems.

Teacher Beliefs/Philosophy

It is safe to assume that teachers behave according to their philosophies of life. Associated with this philosophy are values, beliefs, and attitudes. Beliefs/philosophy, whether clearly known or not, determine individuals' goals and the quality of interaction with others.

The importance of beliefs in educational decision making can be demonstrated by value laden words, such as goals, objectives, adequate, and greatest importance. Educators can not afford the luxury of continuing to ignore beliefs in educational planning and decision making. To attempt to forecast,

predict, or engage in long range planning while ignoring the values base of those involved is to plan for failure.

This is not to imply that values are totally neglected in educational planning; for certainly, any school policy manual sets forth noble goals for human direction. However, this aspect is treated in a casual manner. Educators seem to assume that everyone knows the values so there is no point in wasting time with exploration. What happens very often is that what everyone seems to know, no one knows.

The philosophies of individuals within an institution collectively serve to contribute to the philosophy of that institution. Different schools value different things. It is not only desirable, but absolutely crucial if meaningful direction is to emerge, that individuals within an institution have a crystal clear grasp of their basic beliefs relative to human nature and have cognizance of how these beliefs are translated into their educational practices. Different beliefs reflect and demand different behaviors.

Perceptual Baseline System

The writers recommend, as a beginning point for staff development, the establishing of perceptual baseline data dealing exclusively with personal beliefs of teachers. Due to the cumulative effect of personal beliefs of teachers on student learning, this aspect of school improvement must occur before students' needs are entertained. The perceptual baseline system is a strategy designed to ascertain the degree of congruence between one's perceived philosophic beliefs and perceived day-to-day practices. The system is not designed to foster change, but to encourage

self awareness, self acceptance, and harmony between self-reported beliefs and practices.

Usually educational decision and planning are based on baseline data. In such an approach information is obtained through some kind of need assessment procedure (usually a questionnaire) designed to accommodate the needs of the institution as opposed to being sensitive to the persons within the institution. The participants (teachers and students) are viewed as role players in an ongoing drama instead of persons involved in the process of education. Baseline data is role and institutional oriented; perceptual baseline data is person oriented, consequently having philosophical-values, psychological, and emotional dimensions.

The following is an attempt to contrast the two approaches:

Needs Assessment or Baseline Approach	Perceptual Baseline System
1. Obtains information about teachers' needs that will serve to enhance their role as determined by institutional goals.	1. Obtains information about personal beliefs and practices and provides individual teachers with this information.
2. Recommendations for school improvement are made to bring teaching skills up to standard as set by institution.	2. Individual is presented with personal data relative to educational beliefs and practices.
3. School objectives are established by institution.	3. Individual is encouraged to determine personal beliefs.

4. Content for implementation of inservice programs is selected and organized by representatives of the institution.	4. Individual plans personal and professional growth of self.
5. Learning experiences are selected and organized by institutional representatives, usually supervisory personnel.	5. Individual and/or groups of individuals initiate, design, develop and implement active learning experiences.
6. An evaluation design is specified by institution.	6. Individual and/or groups of individuals revise and refine current activities.

Activities engaged in by persons according to the two approaches generally do not vary greatly. The emphasis is on priority of the person's beliefs over role needs. In the perceptual baseline system approach the school leader opts for personal power over status power. In this posture the emphasis is on active involvement of individual persons in professional and personal growth opportunities. When persons are actively involved in learning experiences the knowledge acquired has personal meaning and becomes the catalyst for bringing about congruency between beliefs and practices. Knowledge disseminated to a passive victim will not fulfill this function.

Our attempts at assisting varous faculty groups in their efforts to identify the degree of congruence between their beliefs and practices indicated the need for some kind of tool to facilitate this endeavor.

Therefore, we created an instrument entitled Part I: Educational Beliefs System Inventory, and Part II: Educational Practice Belief Inventory. The instruments identify the degree to which persons are experiencing congruency between their professed beliefs and educational practices. The instrumentation is intended as a tool for dialogue and self assessment rather than a technique for measurement.

The Educational Beliefs System Inventory. The Educational Beliefs System Inventory (EBSI) is a 69 item inventory composed of statements clustered under the following sub-tests.

1. What do you believe about Human Nature?
2. What do you believe about Motivation?
3. What do you believe about the Conditions of Learning?
4. What do you believe about Social Learning?
5. What do you believe about Intellectual Development?
6. What do you believe about Knowledge?
7. What do you believe about Society?

Each sub-test contains equal number of statements from three educational camps: 1) Behavioristic psychology - Idealism philosophy, 2) Cognitive psychology - Experimentalism philosophy and 3) Humanistic psychology - Existentialism philosophy. Each sub-test is designed to yield socres which correspond to the three particular educational camps.

The Educational Practice Belief Inventory. The Educational Practice Belief Inventory (EPBI) is a 69 item inventory composed of statements clustered under the following sub-tests:

9. What do you believe about Instruction?
10. What do you believe about Curriculum?

11. What do you believe about Organization?
12. What do you believe about Content?
13. What do you believe about Materials and Resources?
14. What do you believe about Evaluation?

This instrument also yields a philosophical profile relative to the three educational camps. A key for each sub-test according to the three camps has been created and can be used for facilitating interpretation.

Validity and Reliability. The two instruments have been validated by a jury of experts. Reliability was achieved through the use of the Cronbach Alpha Internal Consistency Reliability Scale. The internal consistency reliability for the total A, B, and C sub-tests for the Educational Beliefs System Inventory are: A, .858; B, .796; C, .810. The internal consistency reliability for the total A, B, and C sub-tests for the Educational Practice Beliefs System are A, .825; B, .846; C, .795. When the two intruments are combined and considered as a whole, the total reliability for the A, B, and C sub-tests are: .917, .884, .896.

Profile. The EBSI and EPBI provide each individual with an A, B, and C profile. When scores from the thirteen sub-tests are plotted graphically, the teacher can determine: 1) if their personal educational beliefs and practices are harmonious or in conflict, and 2) the degree of compatibility between their personal educational philosophy and that of their colleagues.

INSERT FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE

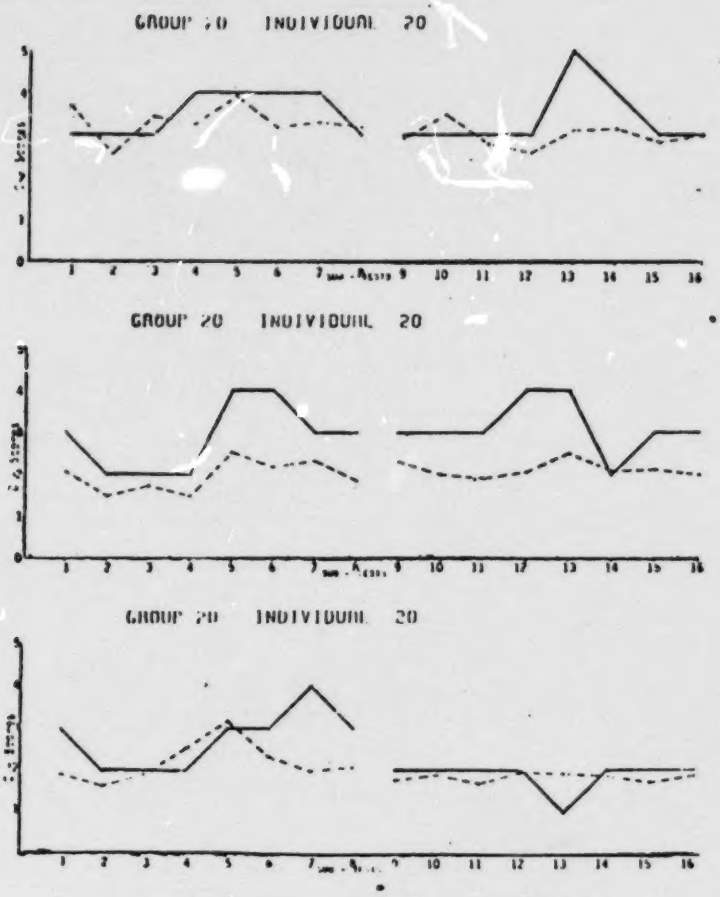

Figure 1. Non-harmonious Individual Profile, Sample

Figure 1 is an example of an individual (solid line) and school composite profile (broken line). In Figure 1 the "A" scores show general disagreement with Behavioristic beliefs and complete disagreement with Behavioristic practice concerning materials and resources (sub-test 13). The group belief profile fluctuates from agreement with sub-test 2 (Motivation) to disagreement with sub-test 6 (Intellectual Development). The group practice profile mainly indicates uncertainty in both theory and practice.

The "B" scores in Figure 1 indicate agreement with Cognitive psychology and Experimentalism philosophy in sub-test 2 (Motivation), 3 (Conditions of Learning), and 4 (Social Learning). This individual disagrees with Cognitive psychology and Experimentalism philosophy on sub-tests 5 (Intellectual Development) and 6 (Knowledge). In practice, there is disagreement on sub-tests 12 (Content) and 13 (Materials and Resources) but agreement on sub-test 14 (Evaluation). The group profile reveals that as a whole the teachers' beliefs and practices closely follow Cognitive psychology and Experimentalism philosophy.

The "C" profile indicates general disagreement with Humanistic psychology and Existential philosophy relative to the nature of society (sub-test 7). However, the composite score (sub-test 8) of the individual's "C" profile indicates an uncertain position. Profiles B and C indicate a blending of Cognitive psychology and Experimentalism philosophy with Humanistic psychology and Existential philosophy in educational beliefs. In practice, the individual tends to be in moderate or total agreement with Humanistic psychology and Existential philosophy.

The group profiles also indicate that the teachers tend to blend

Cognitive psychology and Experimentalism with Humanism and Existentialism in educational beliefs and practices. However, they seem to align themselves more closely with Cognitive psychology and Experimentalism in educational beliefs.

The profiles of individuals experiencing belief/practice harmony would show beliefs closely aligned with their practices. This would be represented graphically by a flat line or almost flat line on sub-tests 1-7 (educational beliefs) and on sub-tests 9-14 (beliefs about educational practices). A strong belief will be graphed with a flat line either towards the top (complete disagreement) or near the bottom (complete agreement). An individual whose profile tends to be a flat line around the middle (3) merely exhibits uncertainty.

The purpose of the profile is not to convince a person, or for that matter a total faculty, to change philosophic beliefs or teaching behaviors, but hopefully it will inspire some thinking about the personal and professional direction the person or persons wish to pursue. The strength of the instrument lies in the discussion that follows the reporting of results. If an individual or the entire faculty is dissatisfied with the results then certainly the instruments can be used as a tool for planning as well as for decision making. The results of the instruments simply do not allow for the ignoring of crucial philosophic issues.

A Concluding Comment

In writing this article, the authors have focused on the person as central to the role of teacher. We have examined and voiced our opinions about teachers as the unused experts in education planning and decision making. Based on our beliefs about teachers as persons first of all, we

provided a strategy for implementing our beliefs. Certainly we do not offer the strategy as a panacea but as an option to be used to illuminate the person of the teacher. We believe this illumination will make school a better place for boys and girls, a place where children can realize their potentials for loving, creating, growing, and knowing. To this end this article is committed.

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